

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRASIL 07420 251643Z

62

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SUBJECT: FUNERAL OBSERVANCES FOR JUSCELINO KUBITSCHEK

REF: BRASILIA 7371

1. SUMMARY: DEATH AND BURIAL OF FORMER PRESIDENT KUBITSCHEK HAS OCCASIONED VAST NATIONAL OUTPOURING OF AFFECTION AND GRIEF. ARRIVAL OF BODY IN BRASILIA AUGUST 23 AND SUBSEQUENT FUNERAL MASS AND BURIAL DREW CHANTING CROWDS OF UP TO 100,000 BRAZILIANS. GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY UNCERTAIN ABOUT HOW TO RESPOND TO DEATH OF POPULAR EX-PRESIDENT WHO HAD BEEN STRIPPED OF HIS POLITICAL RIGHTS, AVOIDED HIGH-LEVEL INVOLVEMENT IN FUNERAL OBSERVANCES AND APPARENTLY DECIDED TO DECLARE MOURNING PERIOD ONLY AFTER SOME SOUL-SEARCHING. END SUMMARY.

2. DEATH AND BURIAL OF FORMER PRESIDENT KUBITSCHEK HAS BEEN AN OCCASION OF VAST OUTPOURING OF POPULAR AFFECTION AND GRIEF. SIZABLE CROWDS GATHERED AUGUST 23 IN RIO WHERE CLOSED COFFIN WAS DISPLAYED AND LATER AT RIO AIRPORT TO SEE REMAINS DEPART ON FINAL FLIGHT TO BRASILIA. IN BRASILIA HUGE CROWDS GATHERED AT AIRPORT AT 4:00 P.M. FOR ARRIVAL OF KUBITSCHEK'S BODY, BREAKING THROUGH POLICE CORDONS

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PAGE 02 BRASIL 07420 251643Z

AT SEVERAL POINTS. THRONGS ALSO LINED ROUTE OF LONG

CORTEGE FROM BRASILIA AIRPORT TO CATHEDRAL WHERE FUNERAL MASS WAS HELD. CROWD ESTIMATED AT EIGHTY TO 100 THOUSAND GATHERED IN AND AROUND CATHEDRAL, AT TIMES BREAKING POLICE LINES AND INTERRUPTING SERVICES. BURIAL WAS ORIGINALLY PLANNED FOR ABOUT 5:00 P.M. IMMEDIATELY AFTER MASS, BUT EMOTIONAL CHANTING CROWDS INSISTED ON ACCOMPANYING COFFIN IN CREEPING PROCESSION OF MORE THAN 5 HOURS FROM CATHEDRAL TO CEMETERY. BURIAL FINALLY TOOK PLACE NEAR MIDNIGHT, WITH CONTINUING PROBLEMS OF CROWD CONTROL AT CEMETERY. MOST OF BRASILIA'S SCHOOLS AND SHOPS CLOSED FOR HALF A DAY AS DID CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, SENATE AND COURTS. WHILE THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH DID NOT DECLARE A HOLIDAY, SEVERAL MINISTERS AUTHORIZED FREE TIME FOR THOSE EMPLOYEES WHO WISHED TO ATTEND KUBITSCHKE OBSERVANCES.

3. WHILE GOVERNMENT FINALLY DID DECLARE THREE-DAYS MOURNING AT ABOUT MID-DAY AUGUST 23, AFTER WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLE DELIBERATION AT PLANALTO PALACE, PARTICIPATION OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN FUNERAL OBSERVANCES WAS NOTICEABLY SMALL. NO MILITARY OR OFFICIAL HONORS WERE PROVIDED, WHICH MINISTRY OF JUSTICE SPOKESMAN CLAIMED WAS IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC REQUEST BY KUBITSCHKE'S WIDOW. NO HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH APPEARED AT EITHER FUNERAL MASS OR AT BURIAL. REPRESENTATION FROM CONGRESS, INCLUDING TOP LEADERSHIP OF BOTH ARENA AND MDB, AND FROM JUDICIAL BRANCH WAS HIGHLY VISIBLE AT SEVERAL POINTS DURING DAY'S EVENTS. SEVERAL STATE GOVERNORS, INCLUDING RIO, MINAS GERAIS, AND FEDERAL DISTRICT, ISSUED OFFICIAL STATEMENTS OF CONDOLENCES, BUT FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BRANCH LIMITED ITSELF TO TERSE OFFICIAL DECREE OF MOURNING. CABINET MINISTERS SUCH AS SEVERO GOMES (INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE), NEY BRAGA (EDUCATION), ARNALDO PRIETO (LABOR), AND LUIZ NASCIMENTO E SILVA (SOCIAL WELFARE), ISSUED PERSONAL STATEMENTS OF CONDOLENCES. MINISTER OF JUSTICE FALCAO, WHO HELD TWO MINISTERIAL POSTS UNDER KUBITSCHKE, DECLINED TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT.

4. KUBITSCHKE'S CAREER AND CONTRIBUTION HAS BEEN MASSIVELY AND EMOTIONALLY EULOGIZED IN STATEMENTS BY CONGRESSIONAL AND POLITICAL LEADERS, AND IN PRESS. FREQUENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BRASIL 07420 251643Z

THEMES HAVE BEEN KUBITSCHKE'S CAPACITY FOR TOLERANCE, COMPASSION AND RECONCILIATION AND HIS GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS AS ORIGINATOR OF BRAZIL'S AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY AND FOUNDER OF THE CITY OF BRASILIA. SOME STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES IN CONGRESS VOICED REGRET THAT POLITICAL LEADER OF SUCH PRESTIGE, WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS TO BRAZIL WERE SO GREAT, HAD TO END HIS CAREER UNDER POLITICAL PROSCRIPTION. (KUBITSCHKE WAS STRIPPED OF HIS POLITICAL RIGHTS BY THE REVOLUTIONARY

GOVERNMENT IN 1964.)

5. BRASILIA PRESS, WHICH DEVOTED WHOLE SECTIONS TO KUBITSCHKEK EULOGIES AND MINUTE DESCRIPTIONS OF OBSERVANCES HERE, DID NOT FAIL TO POINT UP NON-PARTICIPATION OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH. CORREIRO BRASILENSE AUGUST 24 NOTED THAT DECLARATION OF MOURNING WAS ONLY STEP WHICH EXECUTIVE BRANCH TOOK IN RELATION TO KUBITSCHKEK'S DEATH, AND REPORTED GEISEL'S PRESS ADVISOR AS STATING (1) THE GOVERNMENT "HAD RENDERED THE HOMAGE WHICH IT FELT WAS MERITED" (2) IT DID NOT ARRANGE SPECIAL HONORS BECAUSE THE FAMILY DID NOT DESIRE THEM (3) THE GOVERNMENT "DESERVED APPLAUSE FOR ITS ATTITUDE OF "GRANDEZA" (GREATNESS) IN DECLARING OFFICIAL MOURNING" (4) THE PRESIDENT WOULD NOT SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THE FUNERAL NOR A MESSAGE TO THE GRIEVING FAMILY. THE ARTICLE WENT ON TO NOTE THAT AT THE TIME OF THE FUNERAL JUSTICE MINISTER FALCAO WAS SAID TO BE TIED UP WITH THE QUESTION OF JUDICIAL REFORM (A MATTER WHICH HAS BEEN DRAGGING ON FOR MONTHS).

6. COMMENT: GREAT TURNOUT AND WIDESPREAD EMOTIONAL REACTION DEMONSTRATED ONCE AGAIN THAT KUBITSCHKEK WAS CLEARLY MOST POPULAR LIVING POLITICAL FIGURE ON BRAZILIAN SCENE. THIS POPULARITY WAS SUPREME IN BRASILIA, WHICH HE FOUNDED AND WITH WHICH HE HAS SINCE BEEN CLOSELY IDENTIFIED. INDICATIONS ARE THAT GEISEL ADMINISTRATION WAS SOMEWHAT UNCERTAIN AS TO HOW TO RESPOND TO THE DEATH, GIVEN KUBITSCHKEK'S AMBIGUOUS POSITION AS BOTH POPULAR EX-PRESIDENT AND SIMULTANEOUSLY A POLITICAL NON-PERSON BY DECREE. DECISION TO DECLARE THREE DAYS' MOURNING WAS MADE ONLY AFTER CONSIDERABLE DELIBERATION BY GEISEL AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 BRASIL 07420 251643Z

ADVISERS. IN THE MEANTIME MUCH OF BRASILIA AND MANY INSTITUTIONS, SUCH AS CONGRESS AND THE COURTS, WENT AHEAD AND ASSOCIATED THEMSELVES WITH NATIONAL MOOD OF MOURNING WITHOUT WAITING FOR THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH'S LEAD. END COMMENT.
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